

chart is the one that shows the funds available to the city and county road fund. The reason for this decrease is really three-fold. First of all we've had more fuel-efficient automobiles, so people have been buying less gasoline. People have become energy conscious and they've been driving fewer miles. Finally with the exemptions we give for gasohol, fewer tax dollars, sorry Senator Schmit, I see your ears perk up, the money we've been giving to gas...the exemption we've been giving to gasohol has caused fewer dollars to flow into the fund. The State Highway Trust Fund has a handy little exemption from these problems. A few years ago, those of you who were here will remember passing a variable tax rate which lets the State Board of Equalization, each year, increase the tax on gasoline that goes to state roads. Cities and counties are exempted from this. There has been no increase in their tax base since, I believe, back in the late 1970s, when we passed this variable. Another chart I distributed answers what I anticipate being some criticism of this bill. It is often pointed out, erroneously in this body, that Nebraska has the highest gas tax in the nation. If you notice on this chart we are well down the list, down to 16th. Also, if you will notice, any number of states that are below us, the ones I've circled, impose a sales tax on gasoline which brings their tax rate up above Nebraska. So really Nebraska's gas tax rate, at this point, is fairly average for the rest of the nation. I think this is something that is really needed for our cities and counties. Cities and counties that don't have the gas tax user fee to rely upon have to dip into their property taxes. Have any number of the counties in the state that use 25 to 50 percent of their tax...their property tax that they raise to build roads. This is a bill that is needed to raise additional funds for cities and counties. It is a measure of some property tax relief for the cities and counties. It is a fairly simple bill. There has been little opposition to it this year. I urge you to advance it.

PRESIDENT: There is a motion on the desk.

CLERK: Mr. President, Senator Haberman would move to indefinitely postpone the bill. That would lay it over, unless the introducer agrees to take it up at this time.

PRESIDENT: Senator Withem, do you wish to take it up at this time? Motion to indefinitely postpone.